

“Kentucky Leadership”
Testimony for the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee
Terry Holliday, Commissioner of Education
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide the committee with an update on our progress with Senate Bill 1 implementation. I will begin the presentation by focusing on the leadership that Kentucky has displayed for more than 25 years.

First, I will highlight the leadership of the Kentucky General Assembly. From the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act through Senate Bill 1 and beyond, the Kentucky General Assembly has exemplified leadership among the states and set the example for others through the passage of progressive education legislation.

Second, I will highlight the leadership of Kentucky educators. Many states look to Kentucky for the model of implementation leading to education improvement. Kentucky educators have led the nation through the implementation of Senate Bill 1. With the adoption of rigorous standards focused on college- and career-readiness, the implementation of those standards, assessment systems to measure those standards, and an accountability system that holds students, teachers, and administrators accountable for increasing college- and career-ready results, Kentucky educators are seen as the exemplar in the nation.

Third, I will highlight the leadership of our education partners in Kentucky. Not a week goes by that other states do not call and ask how we have achieved so much in such a short period of time. Our answer always includes the terrific partnerships in Kentucky. The Prichard Committee, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky PTA, Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky Association of School Councils and many other state and local education partners have supported Senate Bill 1 implementation and developed a statewide communication effort that is the envy of the nation.

Finally, I will focus attention on Kentucky students and the family and community support systems. Anyone that keeps up with education reports can attest to the recognition that our Kentucky students have received over the last few years. Kentucky is no longer in the bottom tier of states when it comes to education. These recognitions include being one of the states that has seen the most improvement in the National Assessment of Educational Progress since 1990. *Education Week* in the Quality Counts report shows that in the last few years, Kentucky has moved from a ranking of 34th among the states to a top ten ranking this past year. The Diplomas Count report issued this month showed that Kentucky has the 3rd highest improvement in graduation rates since 2000. Education Sector recently reported that Kentucky is making more significant progress in education than most states.

As we provide an update on our progress today, it is an honor for me to work in a state that continues to provide leadership to the rest of the nation. While I recognize that there are some in Kentucky who want to question our results and derail our progress, I encourage this committee and the Kentucky General Assembly not to get distracted by the detractors. They offer a view that is dominated by misinformation, scare tactics and attempts to undermine public education. I encourage the Kentucky General Assembly to take pride in the leadership that Kentucky has exhibited and the tremendous progress that our students are making.

When the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 1 in 2009, the measurable outcome was the percentage of students who graduate from high school that are ready for college and career. When we first measured that outcome in 2010, only 34 percent of our graduates met this expectation. Our estimate for the Class of 2013 is that in excess of 50 percent of our graduates will meet the college- and career-ready expectation. This is tremendous progress in just two years of implementation of the new standards, a new assessment, and a new accountability system.

Clearly, we are on the right track. Now is not the time to slow down; now is the time to press ahead. The future of our children and our Commonwealth is in your hands. Thank you again for this opportunity.